

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY
OFFICE OF FISCAL AND MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS**

200 W. Washington, Suite 301
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 233-0696
<http://www.in.gov/legislative>

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

LS 6768

BILL NUMBER: SB 235

NOTE PREPARED: Jan 17, 2008

BILL AMENDED:

SUBJECT: Vote Centers.

FIRST AUTHOR: Sen. Landske

FIRST SPONSOR:

BILL STATUS: CR Adopted - 1st House

FUNDS AFFECTED: X **GENERAL**
DEDICATED
FEDERAL

IMPACT: State & Local

Summary of Legislation: The bill establishes the use of vote centers as an option for all counties. The bill requires the county election board (CEB), by unanimous vote of its entire membership, to approve an order designating the county a vote center county. The bill requires all CEB members to sign the order, which must be filed with the Election Division. The bill requires the CEB to adopt a plan to administer the vote centers. The bill provides that designation of a county as a vote center county remains in effect until the CEB, by unanimous vote of its entire membership, rescinds the order designating the county as a vote center county and files a copy of the rescission with the Election Division.

The bill redesignates automatically as a vote center county a county designated before July 1, 2008, as a vote center pilot county. The bill allows the Secretary of State (SOS) to designate not later than March 15, 2008, one additional county as a vote center pilot county. The bill repeals the expiration date of the vote center program and provisions that: (1) require SOS approval of the vote center designation; and (2) allow the SOS to revoke the vote center designation.

Effective Date: January 1, 2008 (retroactive); July 1, 2008.

Explanation of State Expenditures: *Summary-* The SOS and the Election Division would have additional administrative duties to designate either pilot or permanent vote centers. Both the SOS and Election Division would be able to carry out the provisions of the bill within their existing level of resources.

Background- The Indiana Election Division reverted \$21,218 to the General Fund at the end of FY 2007. The Division had two vacancies worth \$88,000 in salary as of November 2007.

At the end of FY 2007, the SOS reverted \$42,178 to the state General Fund.

Explanation of State Revenues:

Explanation of Local Expenditures: *Summary-* The establishment of vote centers could reduce the expenditures needed to conduct an election, including payment of fewer poll workers and printing of poll books. However, start-up expenses such as the establishment of an electronic poll book database could offset some of the potential savings. The impact on local expenditures would depend on the adoption of ordinances by CEBs (under unanimous approval) and resolutions of approval by both the county executive and county fiscal body.

Background- Reduction of local expenditures would depend largely on the provision in the bill requiring one vote center per 10,000 active voters. Therefore, the number of vote centers actually established, under the bill, would depend on the number of active voters of counties. The following table depicts the number of precincts vs. the potential number of vote centers statewide (if all counties established vote centers).

Active Voters (as of 11/12/2007)	Minimum Vote Centers under bill (1 per 10,000 voters)	Inactive Voters (as of 11/12/2007)	Number of Active Precincts (as of 4/16/2007)	2004 General Election Registered Voters	2004 General Election Actual Voters Voting
4,492,351	449	496,404	5,648	4,296,602	2,512,142

The number of precincts above overstates the impact, as some precincts are housed together in the same polling place and rely on the same voting equipment. The numbers do state that there would be an overall reduction in the number of polling places compared to if every county maintained precincts at a ratio of approximately 800 active voters per precinct. Each precinct is required to maintain a separate precinct election board. Assuming a ratio of one center per 10,000 voters was generally followed, hundreds of precinct election boards would be eliminated by vote centers. However, actual savings would vary by county, as many counties are currently unable to find enough people to fully staff all of their precinct election boards during an election.

Tippecanoe County- Tippecanoe County was one of two pilot counties designated by the Secretary of State after the passage of P.L. 164-2006 authorizing pilot vote centers. During the 2007 municipal election, Tippecanoe County established 22 vote centers replacing 52 precinct polling locations. Based on testimony in the Census Data Advisory Committee during the 2007 interim, Tippecanoe County was required by law to establish at least six vote centers. Tippecanoe County paid their vote center inspectors \$170 per day during the 2007 election, partially to include increased training time (four hours). Tippecanoe County had budgeted to pay their inspectors \$160 in a conventional precinct election (due to fewer hours of training).

In their forthcoming report to the Secretary of State, Tippecanoe County estimates that a precinct election would have required 260 full-time poll workers versus approximately 142 full-time (plus some additional part-time) poll workers utilized in vote centers during the 2007 municipal election. Additionally, Tippecanoe County paid \$10,750 for electronic polling software for the vote centers. As a result, the county did not have to produce paper versions, which were estimated to cost \$1,782 to produce. Poll book printing savings would break even with the start-up cost of the poll book software within roughly six elections conducted by vote

centers.

The requirement to produce and mail voting postcards, which a voter was supposed to show a poll worker before voting at a vote center (to prevent duplicate voting), cost the county \$12,465 to produce, a cost not required in a conventional precinct election. However, the additional expenditures generated by postcard production for the vote centers were mostly offset by the reduced part-time labor and absentee ballot production costs experienced in the election using vote centers.

Explanation of Local Revenues:

State Agencies Affected: Secretary of State, Election Division.

Local Agencies Affected: County election boards.

Information Sources: *FY 2007 Close-Out General Fund Reversion Summary*; *State of Indiana Detail Staffing Report 7/2/2007*; Linda Phillips, Tippecanoe County Clerk, 765-423-9326.

Fiscal Analyst: Chris Baker, 317-232-9851.